HOW THE MANAGER OF THE NUTRITION DEPARTMENT AT HOSPITAL A MOTIVATED SUBORDINATES AND MANAGED MANPOWER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

In this thematic paper, the leadership style that the leader utilized to motivate followers during the COVID-19 pandemic is clarified in terms of the perception of followers and factors that motivated employees. Qualitative research is done by conducting 8 interviews with 1 leader and 7 followers who are currently working in the Nutrition Department at Hospital A. In conclusion, the leadership style can improve the perceptions of followers resulting in employee motivation during the crisis. Recommendations to the leaders who are working in the Nutrition Department for better preparation, management, and improvement are summarized. In addition, this study gives recommendations to leaders who are interested in leadership styles to motivate subordinates in times of crisis.

KEY WORDS: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP/ KOTTER'S EIGHT-STAGE PARADIGM/ COVID-19/ MOTIVATION/ NUTRITION DEPARTMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus caused the COVID-19 disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognized the information about this new virus on 31 December 2019 according to a report of a cluster of cases of unknown viral pneumonia in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. However, by January 2020, infectious disease experts warned of an impending, very contagious, and potentially deadly pandemic that might overwhelm healthcare systems. The healthcare community faced several issues related to the nature, rate, and prevention of COVID-19 transmission, the progression of disease, and treatment methods. This pressured hospital staff and resources, highlighting the significance of strong leadership in handling these difficulties (Abdi et al., 2022). The role of leaders during this pandemic in promoting employee motivation became more important.

This study will focus on Hospital A, a private hospital in Thailand that provides medical services to in-patients with 208 beds, and approximately 2,200 out-patients. The Nutrition Department is an important department operating food service for in-patients by keeping an internal workforce while many hospitals decide to outsource the management of their nutrition departments. They have all 36 workers consisting of 1 manager, 1 associate manager, 3 nutritionists overseeing food service operations, 4 dietitians for patient consultations about specific-disease diet, 8 cooks for food preparation, 15 waitresses for serving in-patients across wards, 1 dishwasher, 2 administrative officers, and 1 warehouse officer. During the COVID-19 crisis, the manager could manage manpower within the department to survive even though their staff had only a few left due to COVID-19. The number of staff decreased while the number of patients increased could be a reason that demotivated the staff as well.

This study will focus on two theoretical models: Transformational leadership and Kotter's Eight-stage Change Management Paradigm to advance our understanding of how the manager of the nutrition department at Hospital A managed

her employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact this had on employee motivation.

The objectives of this paper, it explains in the research question below:

- Research Question 1: How did the leader manage their subordinates during the crisis?
- Research Question 2: What are the staff's perceptions of the leader in a crisis?
- Research Question 3: Which kind of leadership can motivate these employees in times of crisis?

To respond to these three questions, the qualitative method is used in this study because the result gathered from in-real experience is significant. It can deeply reflect the perspectives of interviewees as well as identify the effective leadership style that can motivate employees during crisis time.
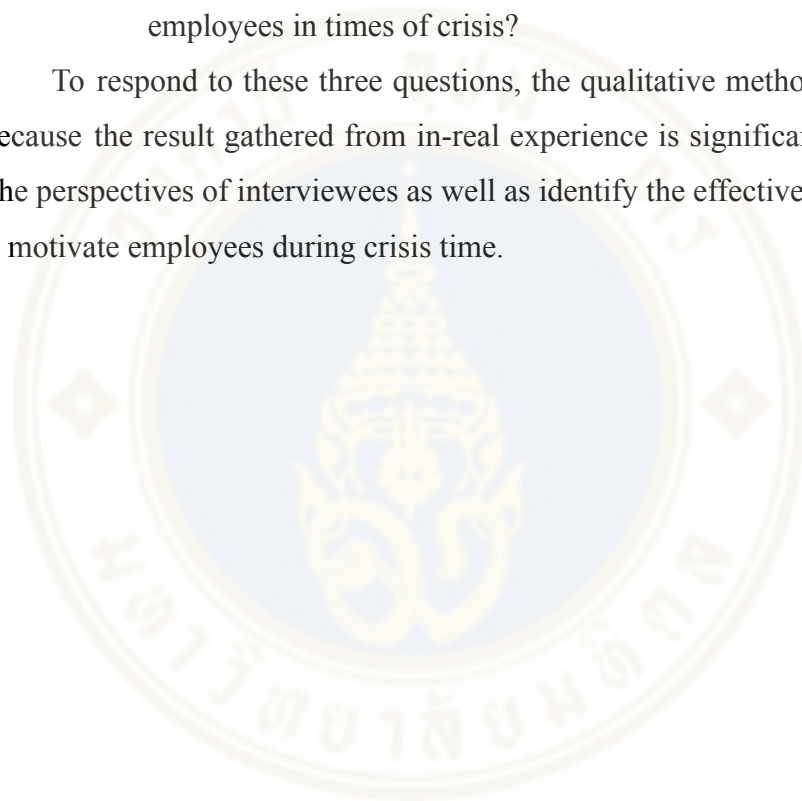
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic delivered new challenges to global enterprises. It affected leadership styles and employee performance. The pandemic forced enterprises to quickly adjust to shifting environments to survive and succeed. Leaders had to handle this pandemic and its influence on employee motivation (Babar et al, 2023).

2.1 How to manage staff during a crisis?

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the healthcare industry (Alzoubi et al., 2023). Studies demonstrated that healthcare workers have suffered high levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction during the pandemic (Dymecka et al., 2021). To motivate the followers, hospital leaders should emphasize the value of the employees' contributions, recognize the employees' efforts when they are needed, fairly assess the employees' role in handling crises, and provide incentives and compliments (Abdi Z et al, 2022). Transformative leadership enables workers to realize what the organization's activities, support, and values are. It can develop a high degree of organizational commitment (Leroy et al., 2012).

2.2 Transformational Leadership

Previous research showed transformational leadership had direct and indirect effects on subordinates' satisfaction through their leader and role and mission clarity. Leaders who explain clearly the followers' role in achieving an organization's vision and have the ability to communicate could influence followers' behavior and performance. Followers get an awareness of the direction of the organization and what they need to do to accomplish the vision. Gaining an overview of where the

organization is going and having a positive perception of their leader can help followers become more motivated (Tracey and Hinkin, 1996).

Burns (1978) conceptualized transformational leadership and explained that transformative leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve organizational vision by aligning with individual goals. Moreover, Burns described that the leaders and followers supported each other to accomplish higher levels, resulting in value system congruence (Krishnan, 2002).

Bass (1985) suggested that transformational leadership theory consisted of four important dimensions, which are intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, charisma, and inspirational motivation. The leaders empowered followers to increase performance and stimulated them to exceed expected outcomes for successfully transforming organizations, colleagues, and subordinates.

1. Intellectual stimulation refers to encouraging follower creativity by challenging questioning preconceptions. Transformational leaders consistently challenge old assumptions, encourage creativity, and motivate followers to adopt new perspectives and work methods.

2. Individualized consideration involves giving each follower specific attention and assistance because each follower has particular abilities and needs. Transformational leaders perform through coaching, advising, educating, and listening actively to each follower.

3. Charisma is a central component in transformational leadership. It refers to gaining followers' confidence, respect, and trust by taking a stand on tough issues.

4. Inspirational motivation is related to effectively communicating a vision and inspiring followers to raise their enthusiasm for work.

After 10 years, charisma was renamed to idealized influence. It is defined as the modeling of exemplary actions that are consistent with corporate goals. It implies that a leader will go beyond followers' self-interest for the greater purpose of the group (Avolio and Bass 1995).

A systematic review found that 13 out of 19 studies found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among hospital staff, while 2 studies did not have significant outcomes. Transformational leadership

can improve the overall performance of hospital staff leading to their job satisfaction, and also increase communication through a clear vision, high inspiration, creativity, and innovation to motivate followers. It positively reflects on the quality of patients' treatment (Hussain, 2021).

2.3 Transformational Leadership During the COVID-19

Leadership in crisis times is a challenging task since it needs to define the task at hand, acknowledge everyone's accomplishments, and maintain an optimistic view of the fact that things will stabilize and return to normal eventually (Wibowo et al., 2020). Job satisfaction among healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic may have been influenced by several factors including increased workload and stress, higher risk of infection, and a shortage of personal protective equipment (Alzoubi et al., 2023). Global healthcare systems face several issues, but none more so than the high rate of occupational burnout and exhaustion among healthcare workers (Whelehan et al, 2021).

Yücel et al., 2021 found that many healthcare employees worked beyond their assigned roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. Transformational leadership practice was important to maintain healthcare staff who work by pushing their physical limitations without reducing their performance below a certain level. In addition, healthcare leaders with four elements of transformational leadership encouraged employees to remain engaged and not resign under the COVID-19 situation. The result of this study revealed that employee performance was encouraged by transformational leaders. They perform better and are generally more devoted to their organizations.

In addition, Irshad et al., 2021 stated that transformational leadership can play an important role in empowering healthcare professionals to deal with the stress of working during the COVID-19 situation. A few researchers specifically studied the role of transformational leadership in the healthcare industry during this pandemic (Alzoubi et al., 2023).

2.4 Kotter's Eight-stage Paradigm

Kotter, 1995 developed his eight-step model for transforming organizations. Kotter's eight-step model offers a systematic strategy for motivating employees by introducing eight steps. Emphasizing the urgency of change encourages employees to prioritize and dedicate their efforts by creating a collaborative sense of the need for action as well as a clear vision that motivates and strengthens employees' dedication to achieving goals. The leaders must follow one by one of eight steps sequentially (see Figure 2.1)

Eight Steps to Transforming Your Organization

Establishing a Sense of Urgency
Examining market and competitive realities
Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities
1

Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition
Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort
Encouraging the group to work together as a team
2

Creating a Vision
Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
Developing strategies for achieving that vision
3

Communicating the Vision
Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
Teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition
4

Empowering Others to Act on the Vision
Getting rid of obstacles to change
Changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions
5

Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins
Planning for visible performance improvements
Creating those improvements
Recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the improvements
6

Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Change
Using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision
Hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision
Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents
7

Institutionalizing New Approaches
Articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success
Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession
8

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW March-April 1995   61

Figure 2.1   Kotter's Eight-stage Paradigm
Source: Kotter (1995, p. 61)

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency: Change is more likely to be accepted by employees if they believe it is required. However, the need for change will be decreased if they believe their organization performs well (Shanafelt et al., 2019). The

leaders identify and discuss crises with their subordinates to establish a sense of urgency.

2. Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition: The leaders form a group with sufficient power to lead the transformation effort and encourage the group to collaborate as a team.

3. Creating a Vision: A clear and interesting vision can direct the transformation effort and staff will have more commitment to change (Mohd Adnan & Valliapan, 2019). The leaders develop strategies for achieving the organization's goals.

4. Communicating the Vision: The employees will have more commitment to change when they receive complete information and realize what's occurring within their organization (Nawaz, et al. 2017). The leaders must communicate the vision to them by using elements to effectively communicate it, including explanation, and leading by example (Kotter, 1996).

5. Empowering Others to Act on the Vision: Eliminating any barriers to the transformation is the first step. This may include restructuring organizational systems. Allocating additional funds, time, or assistance may be necessary to implement the change successfully.

6. Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins: Making plans for visible improvements, creating those improvements, and rewarding individuals engaged are all crucial. Kotter, 1996 suggested that making little victories during a period of transition might improve the process of embracing change.

7. Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Change: It might take years for change to get embedded in an organization's culture as Kotter mentioned that "Successful efforts use the credibility afforded by short-term wins to tackle even bigger problems" (Kotter 1995, p.66)

8. Institutionalizing New Approaches: The organization's leader must collaborate with employees to strengthen and sustain new norms inside the organization.

Furthermore, Kotter's Eight-stage Paradigm emphasizes the difference between management and leadership. It explained that successful transformation comes from 70 to 90 percent of leadership and only 10 to 30 percent of management.

Hence, leaders rather than managers must provide the sacrifice, dedication, and creativity required for an organization's change (Kotter, 1996).

2.5 Kotter's Eight-stage Paradigm During the COVID-19 Crisis

Crain, M. A. et al. (2021) studied healthcare leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic by focusing on how Kotter's Leading Change eight-stage paradigm could contribute to successful organizational change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They interviewed organizational leaders at West Virginia University Hospitals and Health System (WVUHS). After analysis, the result showed that Kotter's Leading Change stages are a useful framework for healthcare organizations that need to transform their operations in response to a crisis time. When compared to other states, WVUHS had lower COVID-19 immunization and death rates, and WVUHS could manage and limit COVID-19 cases effectively.

According to the Creating and Communicating a Vision steps from this study, the WVU Dean of Health Sciences set up a vision for the revolution in healthcare at WVUHS that their role was to provide the best advice practices for avoiding infection with COVID-19, and how to try to reduce the surge and the stress on their healthcare system. After that, the leadership team communicated rapidly and efficiently the importance of prioritizing COVID-19 to all healthcare staff to handle this situation via innovative email, website, and newsletter networks.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

According to Literature Reviews in Chapter 2, previous studies reflect the theoretical data related to healthcare leaders' management and how they operated to motivate their subordinates during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, few researches have been done in specific departments in the healthcare organization; especially the Nutrition department where staff also play an important role in providing patient care. Therefore, it requires primary data to support this thematic paper. Conducting interviews with both the leader and followers who have experienced the crises might provide valuable insights into their motivational perspectives. The qualitative research methodology will be applied in this study. The data will be collected through in-depth interviews. Incorporating personal experiences allows us to understand the perspectives, emotions, and motivations of the interviewees while also improving the reliability of the conclusion (McDaniel & Gates, 2015).

3.2 Interview Method

The primary data for this study will be derived from conducted interviews. This approach delivers in-depth information from question-and-answer sessions through interactive communication. The interview process will be outlined below.

Sample selection: For this research, the interviews will be conducted with 8 interviewees. It consists of a manager of the nutrition department and 7 subordinates who have experience during the COVID-19 pandemic at a private hospital in Thailand.

Table 3.1 List of interviewees

Code	Position	Position in Company	Gender	Work Experience	Age
A	Leader	Manager	Female	36 years	60 years old
B	Follower	Nutritionist	Female	15 years	40 years old
C	Follower	Nutritionist	Female	13 years	41 years old
D	Follower	Cook	Female	25 years	45 years old
E	Follower	Cook	Female	20 years	59 years old
F	Follower	Waitress	Female	27 years	45 years old
G	Follower	Waitress	Female	5 years	36 years old
H	Follower	Dishwasher	Female	15 years	45 years old

Open-ended questions: To understand the motivation approach that the nutrition department leader inspired subordinates and how to manage the team during COVID-19 through their real-life experiences, open-ended questions are selected to allow respondents to express their experiences more freely. The list of open-ended questions is shown in the table below.

Table 3.2 Open-ended question list

Factors to investigate	Open-ended Question
Leadership style (For manager)	● How have you adapted your leadership style to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic? ● How have you fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose among your team members amidst the pandemic? ● How do you promote collaboration and teamwork among your staff members while adhering to social distancing and other COVID-19 safety measures? ● How do you communicate a clear vision for navigating the challenges posed by COVID-19 to your staff? ● What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure that changes implemented during COVID-19 are sustained and integrated into the department's culture in the long term?

Table 3.2 Open-ended question list (Cont.)

Factors to investigate	Open-ended Question
	● Can you give examples of how you've inspired and motivated your team members during these uncertain times? ● Have you encountered any obstacles in maintaining employee motivation during COVID-19? If so, how have you addressed them?
Employee Motivation (For employees)	● Can you share any example where you felt particularly motivated or appreciated by your manager or colleagues during COVID-19? ● How important do you feel recognition and appreciation are in maintaining motivation during the pandemic? ● Have you encountered any difficulties or obstacles that have negatively impacted your motivation at work during this time? ● What suggestions or recommendations do you have for the manager to further enhance their efforts in motivating employees during the ongoing pandemic?
Perception of followers (For employees)	● Have you noticed any changes in the overall morale or motivation levels of your colleagues following the manager's attempts to motivate the team? ● In your opinion, what approaches used by the manager have been most effective in boosting employee motivation during COVID-19? ● Can you give examples of how the manager has communicated with transparency and empathy regarding the challenges posed by the pandemic? ● How do you think the manager's actions have contributed to fostering a sense of unity and teamwork within the nutrition department during COVID-19?

Probing technique: Probing technique will be used during the interview process to get more information from the respondents. Firstly, the conversation will be started with open-ended questions. Probing techniques will then be used to go deeper

to get valuable insights and in-depth details of the respondents' opinions. Lastly, to make sure that both the interviewer and the interviewee have a mutual comprehension of the material covered in each topic, closing questions will be asked.

Interview: The interviews are performed through interactive face-to-face conversations with the interviewees in the interviewee's office and working area. What the respondents say will be recorded. In addition, the interviewees' body language, gestures, and facial expressions have all been observed and made note-taking then. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, including an introduction, open-ended and probing questions.

3.3 Research Framework

The research framework will clarify how the information gathered from in-depth interviews relates to the findings about leadership style, followers' perceptions of their leader, and followers' motivation, one way to determine the elements of this study is through qualitative research methodology. Employment motivation relates to the perception of followers that is influenced by the leadership style. Therefore, the study model illustrating the correlation between the three finding factors is displayed in Figure 3.1 below.

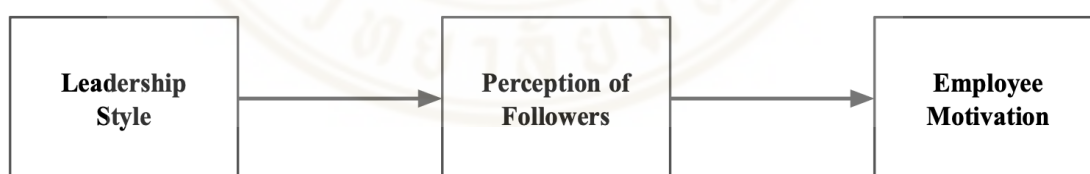| Leadership Style | → | Perception of Followers | → | Employee Motivation |

Figure 3.1 Research Framework of Leadership Style of the Manager of the Nutrition Department, Perception of Followers, and Employee Motivation at Hospital A

CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS

Following the qualitative research approach of interviewing respondents, the findings from sample interviewees are analysed and summarized in this chapter by grouping into 4 main topics Characteristics of the Interviewees, The Leadership Style, The Followers' Perception, and Motivation.

4.1 Characteristics of the Interviewees

The total number of interviewees is 8 females consisting of 1 manager and 7 subordinates. The average age of interviewees is 46 years old within the range between 36 to 60 years old. There are 4 interviewees with more than 20 years' experience (Mrs.A and Mrs.E extended their work contract after retirement), 3 interviewees with 13 to 15 years' experience, and only 1 interviewee with 5 years' experience which was the same time the COVID outbreak began.

4.2 The Leadership Style during the COVID-19 crisis

To get information from the leader on how she managed her followers during COVID-19, a variety of questions have been posed in this section. In addition, certain interview questions were asked of followers to support the analytical conclusion on the leadership style. The results are analysed below.

4.2.1 Establishing a Sense of Urgency and Communicating a Vision

According to the interview, the manager arranged a daily team meeting beginning at about eight in the morning to review the job responsibilities and communicate the vision to subordinates. The manager mentioned that the goal of the meeting was to facilitate the understanding among staff members that COVID-19 was

an unanticipated incident that affected not only our institution but many others as well. Therefore, we required more collaboration. Five corporate core values reinforced the emphasis on teamwork. Mrs.A said "I will teach them about 'CARES'. The first one is C first. C is customer-centric. Therefore, the team must know what we are doing for whom. The second one is when we know who our customers are, we must be honest in our duties. This is A for Accountability and Integrity. Therefore, we require identification for food delivery according to our standards; verify First and last name and date of birth, then check the food on the tray to see if it is correct for each customer or not. This is what all our waitresses must do. And another important thing is E 'Excellent teamwork'. And the most important thing is S 'Safety'. Safety is related to fire, right? Therefore, for any kind of fire, we have to lay the basics of safety first. And the last thing is the success of the work 'Result-oriented'. This can happen if we work as a team."

Furthermore, changing circumstances have prompted adjustments in employee work patterns. The manager has clarified work procedures and regularly updates employees on information received from the hospital's infection control department (IC). Moreover, there is an increased emphasis on hygiene, including wearing masks, using hand sanitizer often, avoiding communal eating, and keeping a distance of at least two meters to minimize the risk of infection among departmental staff. Before working each day, there would be a team gathering. Then the manager assigned tasks and responsibilities to individual staff.

Moreover, she emphasized hygiene. "All staff must wear a hygienic mask at all times and she is also strict about distances for each employee." Mrs.B said.

4.2.2 Flexible manpower management when employees were infected with the disease

The manager effectively managed the workforce by assigning other staff who were scheduled for their day off to cover the shifts of infected staff members. These employees understood the situation and cooperated accordingly. Mrs.F mentioned that "A daily manpower is quite fixable, so when some staff got COVID-19, the other staff who have day-off on that day need to work instead of those who were infected. By the way, everyone understood that situation and supported each

other very well." In the initial phase of the COVID situation, doctors typically advised infected individuals to take a ten-day break which was a pretty long time. As a result, uninfected workers were required to work longer consecutive days. It increased their workload. In addition, there is some data supported by Mrs.G who has the least years' experience, she said "During the crisis, there was an employee in the department who got infected daily and they had to leave for 10 days. Those who still were healthy must continue working. It led me to work continually for as long as eighteen days. If you asked me felt tired or not, I would say yes, I was tired but I could get through it."

4.2.3 Empowering employees

During morning team meetings, the manager routinely interacted with staff members to talk about work procedures and address issues or unexpected events. Instead of placing blame, the manager emphasized the importance of working as a team to solve problems and learn from others. This approach ensures that all employees understand how to handle similar situations in the future. Following these morning meetings, team members come together with a morale-boosting "Hey" yell to build a pleasant workplace environment. Mrs.A said "Sending a voice: Hey, it could create motivation and power. If we didn't create it here, employees, who came to work in the hospital during the crisis, would give up. Because they might think that Would they get COVID? And When would they get COVID? So, 'Hey' was the most important power that made us united. Also, it reflected that we would fight and must get through it together."

During the peak of the COVID epidemic, which resulted in an increase in illnesses among department employees, just one cook remained out of the initial eight. Managers faced an important challenge as a result of this situation and an increase in the number of patients. To address the shortage, the manager assigned a waitress with cooking skills to assist in the kitchen. Furthermore, coordination with the hospital restaurant led to the addition of more staff members to the nutrition department. Additionally, the manager stepped in as a kitchen crew member. She was responsible for making food for patients with dietary restrictions. These proactive measures not only alleviated the workload but also served as a source of encouragement for the staff.

4.2.4 Creating clear KPIs

The manager formulated clear KPIs by determining what individual staff was responsible for in the catering processes in a day. She gathered daily individual performance data to evaluate with monthly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Due to the various educational levels of subordinates, communicating the KPIs should be easy to understand. The manager assigned what each position should do, such as, chefs being expected to prepare meals correctly, waiters serving food correctly, and nutritionists receiving patient information accurately. Mrs.A said "I collected their work performances through the KPIs every month. I would provide documents to them because they didn't have their laptop. After that, they needed to honestly complete those documents by themselves and if any unexpected events occur, they will report me directly. If not, that's fine that nothing happened." Moreover, when some staff finished their daily work, the manager assigned other jobs to do. Mrs.A stated "I provided them opportunities to learn the other jobs in the department and observed their interest in that job. If they proved themselves that they could do it well, I would permit them to move to another position and also give them some extra money if that job is harder. In addition, another advantage of multi-skilling is that we would be able to go through difficult times like a pandemic because our employees have various skills."

4.3 Perception of Followers towards the leadership style during the crisis

This part focuses on the perception of the followers through the work experiences of the leadership style. The seven interviews were examined about their points of view as below.

4.3.1 Excellent Teamwork

Mrs.H mentioned that all employees helped each other because they wouldn't take a break if the jobs hadn't been done. Basically, the manager ordered all waitresses to rotate the wards to learn everything in the department. Anyone had the opportunity to substitute for others in their work. This is related to what the manager

said: "I desired for employees to have various skills although they didn't need to be the best in every task. The epidemic had highlighted the significance of increasing our training efforts to ensure a larger pool of qualified staff."

4.3.2 Transparent Communication

Mrs.B stated that she was informed by the leader about hygienic precautions launched by the IC department. All operational-level staff must be informed by their supervisor and then they must acknowledge by signing on either document or hospital system to be evidence. Most of the time, the manager gathered the team in the morning. However, if there was an urgent matter that must be notified immediately, the manager would take action at that time. Addressing concerns and providing regular updates helps to reduce anxiety and uncertainty among employees.

4.3.3 Support from Leader

Mrs.D who was the only one cook left during that time said that she received assistance from everyone in the department, especially the manager. She stepped into the kitchen and then helped her to prepare some ingredients and cook some foods for patients. The leader said to her that "Do as much as you can do, that's fine if you finish late." Mrs.D felt that she wasn't pressured by the leader and this also could empower her to continue her job until completion. However, she said that she did it best.

4.3.4 Aspects that need to be enhanced

All followers were asked about aspects of the leadership style they wanted to improve. Five out of seven interviewees indicated that they were satisfied. However, Mrs. B and Mrs. C, who are nutritionists, couldn't agree. They expressed a desire for higher pay, especially considering the increased risk of infection faced by those working in hospitals during the pandemic. They believe that all employees should receive higher salaries than usual. Additionally, both of them suggested that money could serve as a motivation for employees.

4.4 Factors that motivated employees during the crisis

To understand the reason why all interviewees got through the crisis times and still work there today, several questions were asked and the results are summarized below.

4.4.1 Consistent Communication

Five out of Seven interviewees mentioned that the manager consistently communicated every morning. She updated the situation to staff and then emphasized on how to protect themselves from the COVID-19. Also, she expressed her concern to all staff. Mrs.F said "COVID-19 increased my nervousness, I didn't want to get infected with this disease. During that time, the manager often alerts us about what's going on and how we take care of ourselves." It is similar with Mrs.B and Mrs.C, Mrs.B said "The managers frequently emphasized the importance of self-care during the COVID situation and informed us how we look after ourselves to prevent infection. Due to the circumstances at the time, if the employees were not sick but were at risk, they would be required to quarantine for at least seven days. When the number of employees declined but the task remained the same, we must take care of ourselves more. I believe that is the most important motivator she gave us." Moreover, Mrs.H, another interviewee mentioned about encouragement that she received from the manager that "She often cheered up employees in the morning meeting and said that we would go through this crisis together." Consistent communication enables leaders to provide team members with help, guidance, and encouragement to provide timely assistance or resources as needed. Employees feel empowered and confident which inspires them to overcome challenges.

4.4.2 Empathy

The manager noticed that her associate manager constantly checked on the health conditions of the staff as a means to show empathy. She would advise staff members to consult doctors if she saw that they weren't feeling well. Moreover, Mrs.C said "The manager told me to take care of my health conditions. If I was sick, tell her." Also, the manager constantly emphasized hygiene with hand washing, face masks, and social distancing. This approach could decrease the number of infected employees in

the department. Mrs.E, who extended her work contacts after retirement, said "I received a present once from the manager when I got sick. She expressed empathy to me, this was the reason I extended the contract."

4.4.3 Wages and Benefits

Mrs.G said that her motivation was Overtime Pay which she was topped up from her wages. This is because there wasn't enough staff, thus she had to work many days in a row. She didn't feel demotivated. Moreover, the hospital allocated COVID-19 vaccines to all employees without requiring them to register separately, unlike other Thai citizens. Therefore, she received the vaccine earlier than others. Another employee also mentioned the wages is Mrs.F. She said "Due to a decrease in the number of healthy employees, I had to work more and more. Anyway, I still got overtime compensation that was calculated equal to 1.5 times base salary." These two employees were satisfied with the wages and benefits.

4.4.4 Lead by Example

Being an example is a factor that can motivate followers. Mrs.D said "My work increased during the COVID-19 because I was the only cook left in the kitchen. Other cooks were infected with this disease leading me to have more duties. I had to prepare ingredients and also cook for patients and their relatives. I had to have responsibilities for everything. Although I felt tired, I still liked to work here. Luckily, the manager helped me to cook. She prepared ingredients and cooked for patients with specific diseases." Meanwhile, the manager said "Although I am a manager, I had to listen to what the cook said to me about planning and preparing each meal during that crisis time. We didn't regard what level we were. We had to help and support each other." The manager served as an example, particularly in terms of behaviour. This action had an impact on the subordinates by leading to increase their effort and productivity as well as encouraging them to pursue similar paths and overcome challenges during the crisis."

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

In this paper, the manager of the Nutrition Department is interviewed about the leadership style that she integrated with her team during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, perceptions of followers towards the leadership style and employees' motivation regarding the leadership style were discussed with seven followers who come from various work positions. The results are summarized in the research framework of the study as shown in Figure 5.1 below.

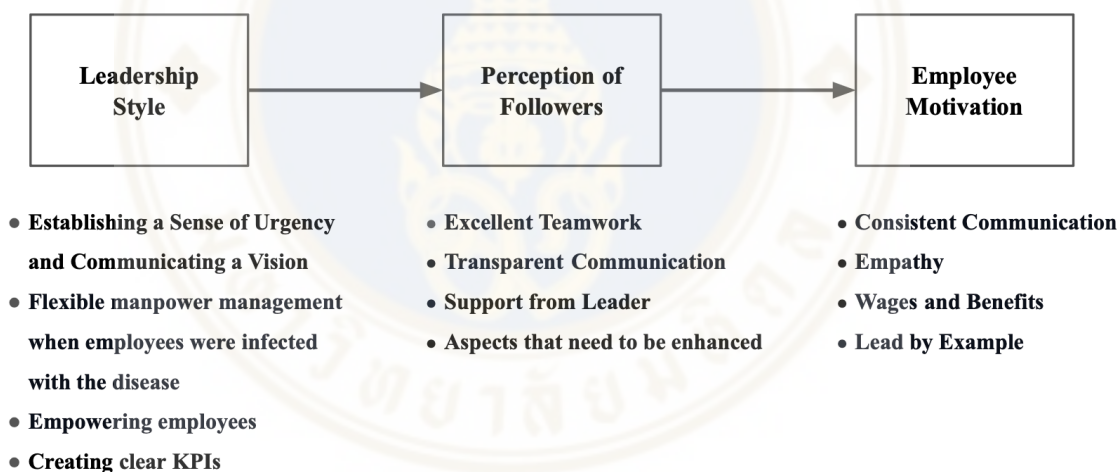| Leadership Style	Perception of Followers	Employee Motivation
• Establishing a Sense of Urgency and Communicating a Vision • Flexible manpower management when employees were infected with the disease • Empowering employees • Creating clear KPIs	• Excellent Teamwork • Transparent Communication • Support from Leader • Aspects that need to be enhanced	• Consistent Communication • Empathy • Wages and Benefits • Lead by Example

Figure 5.1 Summarized Research Framework of Management Style of the Manager of the Nutrition Department, Perception of Followers, and Employee Motivation at Hospital A

Comparing the findings of this qualitative research to the literature review, it can be concluded that there are some similarities In terms of the leadership style, firstly, the leader established a sense of urgency. After that, she created a vision and communicated it to her team in the daily morning meeting. She also managed manpower flexibly when some subordinates were infected with the disease. Next, she

addressed issues or unexpected events to the team to solve problems together. Before the meeting ended, she empowered her team with a morale-boosting yell "Hey" to build a pleasant workplace environment. Their performances were monthly evaluated with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Additionally, the manager assigned other jobs to staff to learn. When the next difficult times like a pandemic come, the organization can go through because employees have various skills. It can be seen that many steps were similar to Kotter's Eight-stage Paradigm, for example, Establishing a Sense of Urgency, Creating a Vision, Communicating the Vision, and Empowering Others to Act on the Vision.

In terms of staff's perceptions of the leader in a crisis, they perceive four elements, including Excellent Teamwork, Transparent Communication, Support from the Leader, and Aspects that need to be enhanced such as higher salary.

In terms of the leadership style, according to the data analysis part, it concludes that the leader used all four components of the transformational leadership style. She encouraged followers' creativity by addressing problems and motivating followers to adopt new perspectives and work methods. Moreover, she had individualized consideration by assigning other interesting jobs to followers to learn. Thirdly, the leader has charisma skills to communicate with their followers and be a role model. Lastly, she provided inspirational motivation through Consistent Communication, Empathy expression, and Leading by Example. Besides transformational leadership, she also combined transactional leadership style to motivate her followers. Transactional leadership style is that followers are rewarded when their performance meets specific goals. This exchange happens between the leader and follower (Aarons, 2006). The manager utilized Wages and Benefits to reinforce them positively.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the interviews, it was discovered that the leader had various methods to manage and motivate followers in crisis situation. Therefore, this study suggests the following recommendations for The Leadership Style and Motivating Employees through the Leadership Style.

5.2.1 Recommendation for The Leadership Style

According to the study from both the literature review and the interviews, there are similarities in the practical approaches for managing individuals and the team in the hospital A. In order to guide the leaders to become more adept at managing people, the recommendation is that the leader can reinforce positive behavior and cultivate a culture of appreciation within the hospital by regularly recognizing and appreciating their contributions. This may be performed in many ways, including verbal praise during daily morning meetings, written notes of appreciation, awards ceremonies. This helps employees feel valued and encourages them to continue their hard work and dedication during critical times.

5.2.2 Recommendation for other factors that can motivate employees

From the interviews, the leader used four factors that are a combination of transactional and transformational leadership to motivate followers. They consist of Consistent Communication, Empathy, Wages and Benefits, and Lead by Example. However, this study recommends other motivational factors that support employees' morale during the crisis times as follows.

5.2.2.1 Providing Benefit of Free COVID-19 Testing to All Employees

To address the anxiety and uncertainty among employees regarding the potential risk of contracting COVID-19 while working, the management must respond proactively to relieve these concerns. One strategy is to implement a policy of offering complimentary COVID-19 testing to all employees who have suspicions or show symptoms of an infection. This program should also include the communication of information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to allow employees to assess themselves and seek testing as soon as they notice any of these symptoms. Implementing this measure, the hospital can effectively control the spread of the virus by identifying and isolating infected individuals early. Additionally, it demonstrates the organization's consistent dedication for protecting the health and welfare of its employees, which will help promote a sense of security and comfort among staff amid these difficult situations.

5.2.2.2 Providing Mental Health Counseling

Providing Mental Health Counseling by psychologists enables to decrease employees' stress during the crisis. It is important to offer easily accessible and confidential counseling services within either the hospital or online setting that are adapted to the specific needs and schedules of employees. Moreover, the Human Resource department should promote awareness of these services through internal communication channels, for example, e-mail, posters, and daily meetings. Employees should become aware of the psychological impacts of working on the front lines of the pandemic, including stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout. After that, psychologists should follow-up to monitor the mental health to promote resilience and well-being among employees.

5.3 Limitations of this study

The limitations of this study that should be considered are the Gender of the interviewees and the number of participants with less than 10 years of experience. All of the interviewees are Female. Research findings based only on interviews with female participants may not apply to the overall population. Gender diversity among respondents contributes to reflecting a wider range of experiences, perspectives, and thoughts. Regarding work experience, this research shows a limited viewpoint as it only interviewed one out of seven followers with less than a decade of experience. Interviewing with less than 10 years of experience may provide fresh insights and varied perspectives compared to those with greater work experience.

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